

REMARKS

Claims 1-2 and 5-29 are pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended herein and claims 28 and 29 have been added. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-2 and 5-27 UNDER 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 6-8 and 11-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pastryk et al. in view of Tejeda (US 3,869,382). The Examiner contends that although Pastryk fails to teach an ion exchange material used within a washing machine, it would have been obvious to use the silver ion and electrode feature of Tejeda in the invention of Pastryk since it is known to use water softeners in household appliances. The Examiner has suggested that Applicants amend the claims to incorporate additional and distinct structural limitations for the claimed ion eluter to potentially overcome the current rejection.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the ion eluter includes a casing housing the electrodes from which a metallic ion is eluted, the casing having an outflow port through which the water is fed to the shower emitter. Support for the amendment to claim 1 may be found in the specification at paragraphs [0132] to [0135] wherein the casing that houses the ion eluter is described. Furthermore, it is described that, to cope with an increased inside pressure resulting from a narrowed nozzle for shower emission, the casing for housing the electrodes is given a substantially cylindrical (or elliptic, or spherical, or spheroidal) shape. New claim 28 recites that the casing is substantially cylindrical, elliptic, spherical, or spheroidal in shape. New claim 29 recites that the ion eluter further includes terminals that penetrate the casing and by which a voltage is applied to the electrodes, wherein the terminals have a substantially circular cross section. Support for new claim 29 may be found in the specification at paragraph [0145] wherein it is described that the terminals penetrating the casing and by which a voltage is applied to the electrodes are given a substantially circular cross section to prevent destruction due to the inside pressure and to achieve enhanced sealing.

The combined teachings of Tejeda and Pastryk fail to disclose or suggest the water feeding apparatus of claim 1, from which claims 2, 6-8 and 11-29 depend. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 6-8 and 11-27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pastryk et al. and Tejeda and further in view of Obata et al. (US 5,029,458). The Examiner acknowledges that Pastryk et al. and Tejeda fail to teach the claimed shower emitted having a vibrator that atomizes by vibration the water fed thereto, but contends it would have been obvious to combine the water spraying feature of the drying operation of Obata with Pastryk and Tejeda since it is a known and beneficial way of supplying fluid, resulting in even distribution and mixing.

As discussed above, Pastryk et al. and Tejeda fail to disclose or suggest the claimed water feeding apparatus of claim 1 from which claim 5 depends. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claims 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pastryk in view of Tejeda and Obata. The Examiner contends that although Pastryk and Tejeda fail to teach a washing machine having drying functions, combination washer-dryers are well known, and thus it would have been obvious to have the washer-dryer feature of Obata added to Pastryk-Tejeda.

As discussed above, Pastryk et al. and Tejeda fail to disclose or suggest the claimed water feeding apparatus of claim 1 from which claims 9 and 10 depend. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

II. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, all claims 1-2 and 5-29 are believed to be allowable and the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Should a petition for an extension of time be necessary for the timely reply to the outstanding Office Action (or if such a petition has been made and an additional extension is necessary), petition is hereby made and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees (including additional claim fees) to Deposit Account No. 18-0988.

Respectfully submitted,

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